

IN THE WORKS

TUNE IN HERE FOR NEWS ABOUT PERSONNEL SYSTEM REFORM IN WASHINGTON

August 2003

Welcome to *In the Works*, the inaugural issue of the online newsletter that will keep you up to date on the historic transformation of Washington's personnel system, resulting from the Personnel System Reform Act of 2002.

Interagency teams in Washington State government are working with employee groups and the business community to implement the Reform Act, making an already-great workforce even better.

That is the reason for the name given to the personnel reform initiative -- *Washington Works: A Great Workforce, Getting Better.*



A Great Workforce, Getting Better.

In the Works is an electronic newsletter that is home-based at the *Washington Works* Internet website: www.washingtonworks.wa.gov

The website will link you to a wealth of information and resources about Washington's personnel system and its transformation-in-progress.

WHO'S WHO

in personnel system reform in Washington

Enacted:

Washington State Legislature, 2002

Signed into law:

Governor Gary Locke, 2002

Project leaders:

Collective Bargaining:

Gary Moore, Director, Labor Relations

Civil Service Reform:

Sharon Whitehead, Deputy Director,
Department of Personnel

Competitive Contracting:

Grant Fredricks, Deputy Director,
Department of General Administration

Interagency coordination and support:

Gary Robinson, Assistant Director,
Office of Financial Management

THE PERSONNEL SYSTEM REFORM ACT

of 2002 has three key components:

- Collective bargaining
- Competitive contracting
- New human resource system

Several state agencies share responsibility for implementing the *Washington Works* personnel reform.

The Office of Financial Management has primary responsibility for collective bargaining.

The Department of General Administration will write the rules and administer the competitive contracting process.

The Department of Personnel has the lead in development and implementation of the new human resource system.

See the [Washington Works](http://www.washingtonworks.wa.gov) website for answers to frequently asked questions.

INFORMATION SESSIONS: AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN ABOUT NEW SYSTEM & GIVE FEEDBACK

From Spokane to Lacey, Bellingham to Aberdeen, state employees have been getting a first-hand look at proposed changes to the state's human resource system. More than 3,200 employees attended information sessions hosted by the Department of Personnel during August.

Employees who attend the sessions are asked to provide feedback on the proposed changes through a written or on-line questionnaire. Feedback received so far has shown a mix of optimism about the advantages of a more flexible, streamlined system, tempered with concern over the increased discretion that managers will have under the new rules.

Following are some of the more prevalent themes:

- More flexible hiring practices could be a good thing for both employees and agencies/institutions, but some safeguards are needed to protect against favoritism and nepotism.
- Managers need to receive training and be held accountable for their actions.
- Employees should have an opportunity to evaluate their supervisors.
- Some type of guidance and oversight needs to be in place to make sure more flexible salary practices are administered fairly.
- Poor performers need to be held accountable and appropriate corrective action taken when needed.

The [information sessions](#) are continuing through September and into October. Altogether, more than 90 sessions will be held in 30 locations around the state.

COMPUTER SYSTEM CONTRACT SIGNED, PROJECT WORK COMMENCES

The Department of Personnel (DOP) has completed contract negotiations for the state's new Human Resource Management System (HRMS). In July of 2005, the new HRMS will replace the current personnel/payroll system, a 27 year-old mainframe application.

Replacement of the existing mainframe application framework became necessary with the passage of the Personnel Reform Act of 2002. The application could not support the added complexity and data requirements of the reformed civil service system and collective bargaining. After an extensive feasibility study, the state issued a request for proposal (RFP) for an enterprise-level software application and an integrator to assist in its implementation.

Accenture, a leading software integrator with ample experience in both the public and private sectors, will be the prime contractor for HRMS implementation.

Accenture will lead a vendor team that includes several industry heavyweights:

- S.A.P – world's largest business software developer including the HRMS application central to this effort
- Microsoft – technical platforms and architecture
- Hewlett Packard – hardware
- Avanade – customized architectures and scalable infrastructures

Over the last few weeks, DOP has assembled a project team. This team will participate in the design and implementation of the system. Because of the project's scope, the team will be composed of experts on loan from several state agencies as well as key members of DOP's information systems division.

Specific attention will be given to appropriate training and teaming of staff and vendor experts to ensure the appropriate knowledge transfer takes place. This aspect of the implementation process ensures the state will be in a position to maintain the system after implementation.

An essential factor in the success of the implementation is preparing state employees for the significant changes to the workplace. By July 2005, collective bargaining, a completely revamped civil service system, competitive contracting for state work and the new integrated human resources computer system will all be in place.

To help with the transition, the project has begun to assemble a change management network that extends to every agency. This network will be used to increase awareness among state employees, distribute project information, provide support to designated change agents and deliver training to end users.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION INVITES STAKEHOLDER HELP IN COMPETITIVE CONTRACTING RULES

Several hundred representatives from business and labor groups have provided comments at a series of public workshops aimed at shaping the rules that will govern competitive contracting in Washington.

The Department of General Administration will continue the workshops in September. The department expects to file draft rules with the state code revisor's office in November, followed by a public comment period in January.

Competitive contracting would allow bidding for work customarily and historically done by state employees. This is slated to begin July 1, 2005.

Here are the chief concerns that stakeholders expressed during the workshops:

- There is no visible level of coordination among the agencies involved in shaping all facets, including competitive contracting, of the Personnel System Reform Act of 2002.
- All agencies need a common tool to use when deciding whether competitive contracting makes sense for them.
- Standards of service are needed to ensure accountability for any services that are subject to competitive contracting.
- Training must be made available to state employees to ensure they have fair and objective participation in competitive contracting.
- A definition is needed for the section of the rules that relates to work “customarily and historically” done by state employees.

A summary of the comments is available on General Administration’s web site for competitive contracting at: www.ga.wa.gov/competitivecontracting/index.html

The following is a timeline for developing competitive contracting rules:

Until Sept. 11: stakeholder workshops.

December: filing of draft rules.

January 2004: public comment period on draft rules.

March 2004: adopt final rules.

Fall 2004 through spring 2005: target dates for training about the rules.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING TAKES FIRST STEPS

The Labor Relations Office staff is holding meetings in August and September with agency management to gather input in preparation for negotiations.

More about the new collective bargaining process can be found on the Washington Works website.

Washington ★
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Look for the next issue of IN THE WORKS coming soon!